Folk tales in the modern world

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# ABSTRACT

FOLK TALES THE IN THE MODERN WORLD

POLINA KUZMENKO

Folk tales – this is what comes to my mind first when I am thinking of favorite fairy stories of my childhood. Although often creepy and full of questionable situations, they evoke warm memories. Folk stories are usually nature in a no small way. There are always talking animals and magical powers spread out throughout the natural world. Characters of these stories usually live in forests or somehow appear to retain a connection to it. Folk tales are usually instructive in the way they show solutions to life situations or dictate what is good and what is bad. They also usually depict a strong contrast between good and evil, beauty and ugliness, kindness and meanness. I would like to research the topic of folk tales as an element of the upbringing of children to put forward the question of the importance and role of the folk tale in children’s education in modern times. Many tales include unrealistic situations, such as how the wolf can eat six goats without killing them or transformation from a human into the beast. Tales talk about situations which often can be questionable in terms of morals, like eating children or captivating them ("Hansel and Gretel", "The Snow Queen"). But still, many children have been taught basic morals by the school of fairy tales, probably that is why I remember them so vividly. I would like to discuss where the morals of stories come from and what shapes them using the example of three different folklore traditions – Scandinavian, Filipino, and Ukrainian.

## 

## INTRODUCTION

Many fairy tales had been folk stories, transmitted through generations before someone wrote them down. They were traveling from generation to generation, enriching culture and have been stimulating the interest and warming the hearts of human beings since the beginning of history. In this paper, I will argue that folk tales are an important part of culture because they carry reflections on history and play a role in the social definition of morality.

Julius Heuscher defines fairy tales as: “Narrations which, contrary on the Epos or Saga, do not base on or originate from more or less historic persons and events, but which describe the ‘fantastic’, the ‘mysterious’, that which transcends our everyday reality which can be investigated with the natural scientific method.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

“A fairy tale is a fictional story that may feature folkloric characters (such as fairies, goblins, elves, trolls, witches, giants, and talking animals) and enchantments, often involving a far-fetched sequence of events. The term is also used to describe something blessed with unusual happiness, as in ‘fairy tale ending’ (a happy ending) or ‘fairy tale romance’, though not all fairy tales end happily. Fairy tales are a genre in literature. They have their roots in the oral tradition. Fairy tales with very similar plots, characters, and motifs are found spread across many different cultures. Fairy tales also tend to take on the color of their location, through the choice of motifs, the style in which they are told, and the depiction of character and local color.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

And at the same time, folk fairy tales are unique in that way that through the ages they absorbed the wisdom of the folk and the people. The thing about folk tales is that they don't have a specified author. The story could take different shapes because it was retold and passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. This means that the moral factor of the story was formed and defined by many people. I think this idea can lead to the reasoning of social norms and how they were created, and how folk tales took part in it.

“The nature of this genre seems to invite evolution. Originally these deceptively simple stories were passed orally from generation to generation. As the printed word became more accessible, the tales became somewhat less mutable for a time. Today the images we see on the movie screen have firmly implanted themselves in our minds and have all but supplanted the originals.”*[[3]](#footnote-3)*

What is more important than changes is that fairy tales tell us about ourselves and the changes in society. The roots of fairy tales, as known nowadays, come from such varied sources as mythology and the Bible. Common stories and themes of tales can be found in the folklore of different cultures. As, for instance, Cinderella-like stories about girls losing tiny shoes are found already in ancient Egypt and 9th-century China.

Folktales were used sometimes to educate and sometimes to frighten children (and adults), as a warning of the consequences of wrong actions. As time passed, nobility and morality succumbed to changes and took other forms. Society and social norms were always in a flux. Some time ago women had no right to vote and having a farm with slaves was acceptable. But these times have passed, and social norms and laws have changed and evolved, too. Tales have traveled the way of changes in parallel with history, gaining and changing their morality into the appropriate form, depending on historical time.

Among the people of medieval times tales used to pass from older, more experienced ones, onto the younger generation, containing in themselves the parting words of moral wisdom. Tales not only conveyed moral principles but also contained warnings of avoiding naïvety, or walking alone in a forest. Many take place during the hero’s or heroine’s passage from childhood to adulthood, often ending in marriage. The stories often addressed subjects in veiled terms. According to folklore researcher and retired professor D.L. Ashliman, “many fairy tales owe their longevity to an ability to address tabooed subjects in a symbolic manner”.[[4]](#footnote-4) This means that many tales, which seem nice or innocent from first glance, actually originated from darker stories involving themes of adultery, incest, cannibalism, rape, and murder.

## FOLK TALES AS A WAY OF COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

“Children’s literature helps a young child make sense of what it is to be human and helps them understand the world around them. The fairy tale genre provides ways for children to receive important messages.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

“A fairy tale is a fantasy story which gives moral education and can be one of the media used for character building.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

The idea of raising a child and teaching it through the moral of fairy tales has been widespread practice . There are many thinkers, philosophers, and just people who had discovered the idea of communicating with a child through the language of a tale. One of such individuals is Bruno Bettelheim, the author of the book “The Uses of Enchantment”.[[7]](#footnote-7)

When raising a kid, the impact of parents and people who take care of them is as important as the cultural heritage. And Bettelheim’s idea is that cultural heritage is a tool to enrich children’s minds and help them build up, collect work on, enriching and acquire inner resources. Literature does it best. The overwhelming part of children’s literature is designed to teach, and the other part aims to entertain and inform. But only a little amount of it does really enrich children’s minds and helps to bring sense to the children’s perception of the world. The one field in this small amount are folk fairy tales. “Nothing can be as enriching and satisfying to child and adult alike as the folk fairy tale”.[[8]](#footnote-8) A good story not only has to bring children’s attention, entertain them and arouse curiosity but also stimulate their imagination and help to clarify their emotions.

Why do children find such appeal in folk tales? In my opinion, children enjoy folk stories because they don’t avoid discussing “bad people”, “bad situations” and “scary things”. They show life in all dimensions. They show that there is both good and evil, as well as their eternal confrontation together with all the consequences thereof. While in children’s life some parents try to assure their offspring that there is only good out there in the world, or at least try not to mention a lot of the a child cannot and will not feel good all of the time. Sometimes he/she acts inaproprietly, feels down, has negative or aggressive thoughts. And he/she can see the whole array of these feelings reflected in fairy tales. In the book “A Psychiatric Study of Myths and Fairy Tales: Their Origin, Meaning, and Usefulness” Heuscher found that the child gains comfort when he knows that he is not alone with his distressing or negative fantasies, and that his feelings can be valuable sources of strength for useful sublimations. Maybe we should treat children as adults in some way. No one wants to read a predictable and vapid book, without strong characters and intriguing storyline. Then why shouldn’t a child be fonder of a story that brings thrill.

Heuscher found that the child gains comfort when he or she knows that they are not alone with the distressing or negative fantasies and that these feelings can be valuable sources of strength for useful sublimations. Maybe that ought to give perents the idea of treating children as adults to a larger extent. No one wants to read a predictable and vapid book, without strong characters and an intriguing storyline. Why wouldn't a child be fonder of a story that brings thrills?

This is exactly the message that many folk tales carry. A struggle with difficulties throughout one’s whole life is unavoidable. And a fairy tale can be one of the ways to prepare a child for them. Because tales are not afraid to mention death, aging, horrifying situations and many other difficulties that life consists of.

In fairy tales, the perception of good and evil is always straightforward and usually embodied, represented in a particular character(s). Like the Big Bad Wolf in the Little Red Riding Hood, or the good and the bad parent in Cinderella. It is probably done in that way, to make the child distinguish the difference between the two easily. One is stupid, the other – clever, one is beautiful, one – ugly, one is lazy, the other one – hardworking. And at the same time, such strong and labeled distinctions may create a foundation for the child’s beliefs lead to false associations, like ugliness being bad, etc.

Even though today, in modern life, fairy tales might seem outdated and not fulfill the needs of today’s children in the best possible way – many parents believe that tales are valuable in the upbringing of their little ones. Tales carry knowledge about the inner questions of human beings and provide solutions. Folk tales were created long before modern times. People were telling them and teaching children this way ages ago. Folk tales relate to folk wisdom, according to the lessons and canons of which so many generations have grown up.

## BENEFITS OF FOLK TALES

“Fairy tales, unlike any other form of literature, direct the child to discover his identity and calling, and they also suggest what experiences are needed to develop his character further. Fairy tales intimate that a rewarding, good life is within one’s reach despite adversity – but only if one does not shy away from the hazardous struggles without which one can never achieve true identity.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

Bruno Bettelheim claims that these days children only meet tales on TV or in other simplified versions, all of which rob them of all the deep significance and serve nothing but empty-minded entertainment. In his book “The Uses on Enchantments”,[[10]](#footnote-10) he writes that a big part of modern children literature denies human inner conflicts, and, consequently, it does not provide a tool to cope with these conflicts.

Throughout history, a big part of a child’s intellectual life depended on myth and folk fairy tales. Children would come under the sway of fairy tales and form their own concepts of the world. Those were the examples such as that of Hercules that shows that “it is not beneath the dignity of the strongestman to clean the filthiest stable”.[[11]](#footnote-11) But at the same time, they included many examples of abusing aspects like men stealing women against their will and marring them by force.

Many philosophers and modern thinkers were looking at myths and fairy tales from a psychological and philosophical point of view. Mircea Eliade describes myth and folk stories as “models for human behavior be that very fact, give meaning and value to life.”[[12]](#footnote-12) At the same time, Bruno Bettelheim suggests that myths are mostly pessimistic when fairy tales are more optimistic. Fairy tales, whether influenced by magical powers or by accident, have happy endings. Myths tell the stories of superheroes and very specific situations that can only happen to the main character, like relationships between gods and their children, feats, which only superhuman, larger than life individuals are capable of accomplishing, while fairy tales are about everyone and, thus, they may be perceived as universal. airy tales usually describe situations that can happen to everyone, like bringing food to a grandmother. Also, fairy tales rarely include names, characters are being called simply “mother”, “father”, “king, “queen”, “wolf”, “fox”, “prince”, “princess”, which also highlights their universal nature.

The magic of a fairy tale is very important for children. It helps to stimulate their imagination. By thinking about the tale and imagining what is going on in it, children bring their own associations into the tale.

This can lead to a controversial discussion about illustrations.

## CHILDREN ILLUSTRATION

There is a thought of Bruno Bettelheim that illustrations don’t serve the needs of children best, because they tend to distract the imagination. Studies of illustrated primers show that illustrations direct children’s imagination away from how they would experience the story on their own. Instead of imagining their own picture, children perceive the vision of the illustrator. On the other hand, when it comes to imagining a monster, it is subconsciously easier for children to see and get scared but at the same time accept a monster drawn on a paper, in the shape that the illustrator sees fit instead of imagining it and thinking about the scariest things they know in their minds.

As I remember from my own childhood, not many books of folk tales included illustrations. They were mainly adaptations and republished versions which included nice pictures or had been, more or less, designed for kids. I don’t remember myself struggling with the lack of illustrations in folk stories. Pretty illustrations didn’t define a good story for me, they were a nice addition to a story.

But despite this, at a more grown-up age, I was fascinated by nice book designs and illustrations, especially if they were communicative, if they included some entertaining parts, apart from the main plot. So, I think that illustrations are not a must for a good folk story, but if they are done in a quality fashion, they will complement a story to a large degree. Especially nowadays, illustrations can play a huge role in attracting readers to folk stories.

## SCANDINAVIAN FOLK TALES

In this part, I would like to draw attention to various international tales and to compare their ideas and morals, principles and historical aspects that led to the themes behind these tales. I think that for the reader, as well as for me personally, it will be interesting to look at mythological heroes and national characters from fairy tales whose nationalities are located quite far away, at least geographically. Therefore, I chose folklores from quite far apart: Scandinavia and Ukrainie, which is also an example of Slavic folklore. During the research, I also stumbled upon several Filipino tales that turned out to be unusual and interesting to me. Therefore, Filipino folklore became the third example of international tales.

I would like to start with Scandinavian folklore. At first glance, it seems that Scandinavian tales can be divided into adventurous, daily, and magical ones. In world folklore, this classification is generally accepted. However, careful reading is enough to see that this classification is only approximate. And it is not the case that individual motives pass easily from one genre to another. It is the unifying features that lie on another plane. These can be defined, although they also need to be clarified using clear-cut distinctions. In this case, something else is important, however — by describing about, one can “present” Scandinavian tales to the reader which are so similar and at the same time so unlike the tales of other nations. These are the features:

*1. The out-of-history time and space are emphasized, leaving behind the history of the real world.*

“Where are you from, beautiful stranger?” Prince Kari asks the Dirty girl when she appears in a church in a beautiful dress.

“From a washed-washed country,” Kari replies.

“Where are you from, beautiful stranger?” e asks again when a few days later she reappears in church.

“From the Land of Clean Towels,” Kari answers.

For the third time, she answers the same question:

“From the Land of the Golden Combs.”

And the prince begins to roam around the world, looking for her in the Land of the Golden Combs (Norway).[[13]](#footnote-13)

In a Danish tale, a girl lives in a castle “south of the sun, east of the month, in the middle of the wind” — it is probably hard to come up with a more defined location — precisely because of its complete uncertain nature — the setting of the scenery of not only Danish but also Norwegian and Swedish tales. The groom spends a “single moment” in the Kingdom of Heaven, and when he returns to earth, it turns out that a hundred years have passed. This “Kingdom of Heaven” is depicted as a land of abundance, without the slightest intention of instilling religious feeling. This is the “thirtieth kingdom, the far-off state” of Slavic fairy tales, which, try as one might, cannot be located on a geographical map.

Naturally, it does not occur to either the narrator or the listener to think about the history of such a country. Moreover, the vast majority of fairy tales are characterized by this emphasized a-historicalness. The very concept of history as a reality in its development contradicts the concept of a fairy tale, infinitely far from reality. Folk tales breathe nature, they grew up among forests, rivers, lakes, and valleys, but nature does not seem to exist in them. A true geographical name, at first glance, would look like a real object, which should belong to a completely different world. Not to mention that the most fabulous atmosphere with its transformations, with its natural miracles, with its symbolism — resists the authenticity of historical dates and geographical names. It seems almost as though it is following a law. But what to do with Icelandic tales, which, apparently, do not succumb to this principle?

“On Christmas Eve, everyone usually went to church” — this is from the tale “Hildur — the queen of the Elves”.[[14]](#footnote-14) “Once lived in Gnupverjahrepp on a farm…,”[[15]](#footnote-15) begins another tale. Skulholt, the exact geographical concept of the episcopate, is also mentioned there. In the fairy tale “The Fair”, “Last years of the papacy” are indicated — therefore, historically accurate dates are indicated, too.

The heroes of Icelandic tales are not people without a tribe, not heroes in general, not fairytale’s “decorative” characters. The deacon is from Mirkau, Solveig is from Miklabayyar, Grim — from the Western Fjords. And the homeland of not only people but also ghosts, elves, devils, and skesses is indicated. In the fairy tale “Skessian Stone”, which begins: “Next to the Church Farm located in Hrowartung,” the skess turns into stone, and the conscientious narrator even indicates the location of the stone.

While the narrator of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish fairy tales leads the listener to a distant, magical world free of any logical motivation, the Icelanders decided to transfer this world to their harsh land, to their farms, to their barns and barn, so as to find more authenticity of a place set in a particular time and space.

*2. The distance between a person and magic characters — fairies, trolls, skesses, ghosts, etc*.

In any fairy tale, there are two kinds of creatures — some capable of, others unable to perform a miracle. Sometimes the latter, with the help of the former, gain this ability. People — kings, shepherds, blacksmiths, shoemakers, knights, soldiers — face trolls, skesses, evil and good giants, dragons, ghosts, etc. Something supernatural, unprecedented, amazing, caused by unknown force invariably accompanies this clash. But what happens can be treated differently. A miraculous phenomenon can surprise, amaze, frighten, but it can also leave the hero of a fairy tale deeply indifferent. In the Danish fairy tale “Knight Grenhat”, an unknown wizard turns a boy first into a hedgehog, then into a deer, then into a puffer, and then again into a child, and the boy’s father expresses neither surprise nor admiration because of that. In the Swedish fairy tale Zamuhryshka,[[16]](#footnote-16) a peasant son, disobeying his master, goes to a stable and sees that “there is a master's horse, hay under the tail, and heat under the muzzle.” Zamuhryshka felt sorry for the horse and turned it so that “the hay was under the muzzle, and the heat was under the tail.” The Horse, which turns out to be not only an enchanted prince, but a powerful wizard, performs dozens of miracles leading to a happy ending resulting from his gratitude for the service — the king’s daughter becomes the wife of Zamuhryshka. And neither the narrator nor the listener stops at the natural question — why didn’t the horse use its miraculous power to turn its stall so that the heat was under the tail and the hay under the face?

Almost nothing is said about relationships — or, more precisely, the impression that these miracles make on people. Impressions are ascertained. The genre of fairy tale, as it were, predetermines this convention, which is very far removed from real life perception. Miracles do not require explanation. I think this is because explanations would ruin the atmosphere of poetic freedom, which is so characteristic of this genre.

And again, as it was when it was an unreal ‘airy-talish’ *time and space*, Icelandic tales in their own way answer this question. They also offer no explanation of the miracles. But the relationship between people and wizards is completely different — ordinary. Traditionally, established customs are equally binding on both wizards and people. For instance, in one of them a ghost — the dead son of a pastor — smashes windows, hunts sheep and yet at times he talks peacefully with women spinning wool, and in the evenings "he was always given food, like all the household".[[17]](#footnote-17) In another fairy tale, the young elve falls in love with a peasant girl, she expects a child from him, he asks her not to get married for three years, and further on the fairy tale develops without a single mention of the further plot that the hero is a magician.

It would seem that a fairy, a troll, or some other fantastic creature, capable of raising a golden palace or turning a peasant into a bear with one movement of the hand, should not need the help of people who can only make clay pots, raise sheep, etc. However, the narrative strengthens its naturalness and truthfulness. The fact that the logic remains behind the brackets does not matter. The magic world follows its own logic. Moreover: in the magic world, one can masterfully play on a complete, emphasized lack of logic, as Lewis Carroll did in his world-famous Alice in Wonderland story.

*2. Presence of narrator, details from real life.*

It seems to me that the features of Icelandic tales, in which magic is perceived as any other profession, are related to their origin. It is probably hard to say what came first — fairy tales or the sagas. One thing is clear, though, the emphasized authenticity of the saga is far from indifferent to the Icelandic tale. No wonder many tales can be dated, while others dispense with fiction, putting an equality sign between wizards and people. The record is also characteristic of the storytelling — “It is not said anything about how they lived until the next Christmas.” Or: “And I don’t know anything more about this story.” This leads directly to the sagas: "Now we need to talk about Flosi." Or: "So the time passed before the holiday of mid-winter, and nothing happened that was worth telling."[[18]](#footnote-18)

Although in a vague light, in fairy tales, just like in the sagas, the author-narrator appears before us. It is impossible not to mention the "feedback". So, in the “Grettir’s Saga” the most tragic event in the life of a knight is a former fairy tale about a ghost, which is still widely popular in Iceland. Having entered into combat with the “living dead” giant Glam, Grettir defeats him. “But victory turns out to be his defeat. The moment he kills Glam, the moon comes up from behind the cloud, he sees Glam's scary eyes and hears his curse, condemning him to a lonely life in exile... He will now always see Glam's scary eyes and, as a helpless child, be afraid of the dark.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

Icelandic tales are full of details of peasant life, sometimes so specific that the reader can get an idea of this country: people dry hay, sew shoes, tell about how the economy is conducted (Hildur is the queen of the Elves), milk cows. “The time has come to milk the cows again. On a festive night, a farm was usually milked only after reading a prayer”.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Household details are often associated with plot motifs and narratives. Without them, Icelandic tales would have lost a lot of their somewhat rough charm.

*4. Concept of magical numbers and meanings.*

Probably, the number “three” dates back to the religious concept, dating back to ancient Anchor times. The creators of the Scandinavian (and not only Scandinavian) fairy tales used it as an example of the simplest construction: after all, although the listeners of the fairy tales could be adults, they were always told to children. In one tale, the swineherd requires that he be allowed to spend the night at the princess’s door three times, and then, when he marries her and, expelled from the country, they become poor, three times he tests his wife’s hard work. In another tale Black Sinister,[[21]](#footnote-21) the old witch wants to turn an old couple against each other. She advises the old woman to hold a razor three times against the sun, cut three hairs from the old man's beard, and then burn them in the stove. In families, there are almost always three sons, and the youngest succeeds when two elder fail. And even the famous pea, which was meant to test the princess, is given in three ways: a bean, then three peas and, finally, a straw.

Time itself in many fairy tales is divided into three periods, and the third usually solves the problem posed by the eternal storyteller. This composition can be called a ring. This is characteristic of a magical-adventurous, and daily life-based tales. But “chance”, “occurrence”, “true story” are the types of tales we see represented in stories such as “The Pious Servant”, “Pastor in a Barrel”, “Neighbor Paul”, which just as the fairy tales about animals do not need a complex sequence of events. In them there is no clash of the possible with the impossible, there are no miracles, there are no seemingly unsolvable tasks. There are no transformations, they are entertaining but with a moralizing connotation.

In the Danish tale “Good Friend”, poor Johannes gives his last seven marks for the funeral of an unknown dead man. And the dead man turns into his Friend — he asks Johannes to call him that. And the pauper's desires begin to come true. He pities the old woman who broke her leg, and the Friend heals the old woman. He falls in love with a bewitched, wicked, beautiful princess, for whom “the suitors were apparently invisible, and all the kings and princes. Only she tells everyone to guess three times what she thinks, and whoever does not guess, must be hung on a tree in her garden”, Johannes is not only kind, but brave and, contrary to the persuasion of the Friend, decides to try his luck. A Friend solves the mystery of the princess. Three times, having tied “eagle wings and falcon legs” he secretly accompanies the princess who flies to the enchanted troll to help her come up with a riddle, and three times the Friend eavesdrops on their conversation and then tells Johannes what riddle he has to solve. Before the last test, the Friend defeats the troll in a fight, the princess marries a homeless poor man, and the tale ends up with the Friend acknowledging that he is the spirit of the dead man whom Johannes buried: “I paid you back for your good … and now I have to go back to the dead."[[22]](#footnote-22) With these words, the tale seems instructive. In fact, there is no hint of a “moral idea”. The kindness of Johannes is to inspire the listener with an aspiration of an equal motive, about which the listener almost forgets in the face of exciting incidents.

Scandinavian magical folklore stories are immersed in the contemplation of the beautiful and unusual harsh northern nature, dense forests and high mountains, clear lakes, and foggy fjords. The mysterious world is inhabited by fantastic creatures — house, mermaids, forest and mountain trolls, elves, evil sorcerers and kind wizards, Nyssa and dangerous water creatures, witches and immortal, majestic Dragons, the meeting with which can change the fate of a man. Scandinavian folk stories are very unusual. They speak about beautiful charms of nature, but at the same time contain questionable moral stories, which can quite always have negative and even frightening endings. I think Scandinavian folk tales are unique in the way of combining beauty and fear.

## FILIPINO FOLK TALES

The reason why I chose to delve into Filipino folk is that Filipino people not only have unusual and unique traditions but also can serve as an example of a culture developed in closeness with water and warm weather. The location of three folk nations that I chose also differ in their natural phenomena, weather, flora, and fauna. I think it is interesting to explore how these factors can influence their respective folklore.

People of the Philippine islands are very sensitive to culture, which adds even more to the uniqueness and inimitable character of their culture. The culture of the Philippines, which originally shines through the norms of communication, traditions, and customs of the people, is revered by all residents. They value culture, despite the fact that the majority of the population are visiting people of different nations, religions, ethnic groups. Filipinos even came up with a beautiful legend about where their islands came from.

Far in the east, at the very edge of the great Asian continent, seven thousand islands are scattered in the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean. These islands make up the Philippine archipelago and are populated by friendly, hard-working people with brown skin who call themselves Filipinos.

In time immemorial, they say, there was no land yet. There was only sky and sea. And between the sky and the sea, a bird flew. She flew for so long that she was tired, and there was nowhere to sit down to rest since there was still no land. Then the bird decided to turn the sky against the sea. Eventually she succeeded — the sea began to worry, trying to reach the sky, and the sky frowned and darkened. The waves surged higher and higher, almost reaching the sky. The sky was frightened and threw stones at the sea, which became the Philippine Islands. The quick-witted bird sat down to rest, but since then the archipelago coast has been washed by noisy waves crashing into it. Of course, only the people living on the islands could come up with such a legend.

The Philippine tales also have the motives of the Spanish culture, since for a long time the Philippines were a Spanish colony. For example, in some tales, you can find Spanish heroes. Before the conquest of the archipelago, they had no kings, princes, or princesses. TheSpaniards did, and the Filipinos began to readily tell tales of the nobility.

The Filipinos are sea people. The sea in the Philippines can be seen almost everywhere, so they have many tales about the sea — and about the sea king, about why the water in the sea is salty. They live on the islands, so they have many tales about where they came from. The animal and plant life of the Philippines is not the same as in Europe, so they have fairy tales about animals and plants, which many probably never heard of. About the Kuleto bird and about the Java sparrow, about the pineapple and about the Paduk tree, whose juice is as red as blood.

However, although the Philippines are so different in nature and traditions, life values, they do seem similar to Slavic tales. They also do not like greedy and deceitful people, but they also appreciate quick-wittedness; the “small but daring” always wins. Whereas the lazy, evil, and cruel — always get what they deserve.

A “Legend about seven islands” is an example of a classic Philippine folk tale. At the same time, it tells the story of the appearance of seven islands and condemns laziness. It is a story about seven beautiful girls, who were so beautiful that their parents never wanted them to get their hands dirty. That is why all the housework was done by the parents themselves. Once, the parents became ill and asked their daughters to at least cook something to eat. But, because the daughters have never worked and never did anything, they were expecting someone else to cook. Soon the parents died, but their daughters did not care about it. They went to the beach, as they did every day, and there they saw an old man with a stick. They became afraid of him and wanted to run away, but the old man appeared to be a magician. He said one word, and the daughters couldn’t move. He told them that because they didn’t take care of their parents and weren’t sorry about it, he was going to punish them by turning them into seven islands. Even nowadays people say that when the waves are especially high, it is possible to hear the moaning of the seven daughters.

Some Philippine tales, it seems to me, do not have any instructive moral to them at all but simply tell a story, for example, as in the fairy tale "Silly Juan". The story is about a butcher's son who was so silly that all the people called him, Silly Juan. The butcher never entrusted Juan to sell anything because he knew that Juan cannot do any business properly. But once Silly Juan got from his father three small pieces of meat. Juan was walking around the village, trying to sell the meat when he heard a bee flying around and making some noise, he asked a bee – “Do you want to buy some meat?”, and treated her noise as “Yes” answer. He left some meat for her and told her that he’ll be back for the money later. He did the same thing with the pig and an old man sitting in the well. Then he started looking for that bee to get paid for the meat. He saw a fly at the shop and decided it was that bee. He started to run around the shop, repeating – “Pay me!”, but the fly couldn’t say anything back. It continued until the owner of the shop paid Silly Juan and asked him to go away because he scared all the customers at the shop. The same thing happened with the pig and an old man, none of them could pay Silly Juan and in the end, someone paid Juan just to get rid of him. In the end, Silly Juan came home with money, his father saw it and said – “Now, you’ll sell meat every day”.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Who knows, maybe the story does not carry any moral message. Maybe morality is that even silly people, by being stubborn, can get what they want. And maybe it means that the village now would have the most annoying merchant in the world.

The question “Why is the sea salty?” is answered in another self-titled Philippine folk tale. In ancient times, two brothers lived in one village: one was rich and the other was poor. The elder brother lived in a beautiful large house, and he was very rich. And the younger brother with his wife and children lived in a small hut. The villagers did not like the older brother because he was very stingy.

One day during the holiday the family of the younger brother had nothing to eat. The wife and children cried, and the poor man decided to go to his elder brother and ask him for at least some food for the children. The rich man didn’t even let his brother on the doorstep and rudely asked- “What, did he come again to beg?”.[[24]](#footnote-24) “Have pity on my children, at least give something for them, because now it's a holiday”. The older brother threw half the dried ham to the younger brother.

“Take it,” — he shouted, “and leave! And so that your foot is no longer here!”. “Thank you, brother, for my children — now they will not die of hunger”, the poor man said humbly and carried the ham home.

He was already near the hut when an old man called out to him. “I know how you need this crust,” he said, “however, listen to what I tell you”. “Go to the seashore, there you will see a big tree with a hollow, and in this hollow live Duende [magical creatures]. At the entrance to their home lies a small millstone. When the Duende sees a ham, they would like to exchange it for gold and jewelry. But you should demand in return a millstone and do not agree with anything else. The millstone is not simple, but magical, it can create everything that you only ask for.”

The younger brother obeyed the old man and went to the seashore, to the tree, in the hollow of which the Duende lived. Duende at that time had fun and drank palm wine. Seeing the poor man with the ham in his hands, they cried out, “Hey man, let's change — you give us a ham, and we give you gold.” “No, I will only change ham for this millstone.” The Duende did not know that the millstone was magical, and they gave the millstone to the poor, and he gave them the ham. When the poor man returned home, it was already evening. He was greeted by a hungry wife and children. They hoped that he would bring them something to eat, and wept bitterly when, instead of food, they saw a small millstone in their father's hands. “Do not cry,” said the father, “go here and look! We won’t have to starve anymore.” “Milestone, give us meat, boiled fish, seasoned rice and other delicious food! And give us a beautiful house full of all good,” asked the poor brother.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Everything appeared in one moment. How surprised people were when the next morning they saw a large beautiful house at the same palace, where a poor hut used to stand. The story about the magic milestone spread everywhere, and different people from other places began to come to the younger brother. Everyone was trying to buy a wonderful millstone, but the owner of the millstone would never agree.

One night, when everyone was asleep, a salt merchant stole the millstone and carried it in a large boat across the sea. When the coast was not visible and the merchant was no longer afraid that he would be caught, he told the millstone,“Give me salt for sale, a lot of salt.” The millstone spun and the salt started to pour from it. The boat was already filled to the brim, and the salt started to pour because the thief didn’t know how to stop the millstone. Finally, the boat drowned, the salt that was in it dissolved in water, and the millstone fell to the seabed.

People say that the milestone still grinds the salt there. That's why the water in the sea is now so salty.[[26]](#footnote-26)

In this example of a folktale, I like how a sequence of events can lead to an unpredictable and completely unrelated ending. I like the fact that Philippine folk tales do not have cliché events happening in a tale, and you never know where the story will turn.

Filipino folk tales seem to me very bright, even naïve in a good way. I have a feeling that they don’t try to entertain or teach the reader much. They seem to exist on their own, and it is for the reader to decide whether you like them or not. Whether you will read them or not. Filipino folk tales are short and easy to read, perhaps because most of the stories do not try to prove anything to the reader. Or even if the story is instructive, this morality is not forced on you but rather shows what can happen if you act in a specific way. I like the positive feeling of lightness after reading the story and I think children adore them too.

Perhaps folk tales reflect to some extent the local people and their attitude to life. When thinking of the Filipinos, I feel that they look at the world with ease and stick to positive thinking. But, at the same time, it is obvious that they value traditions and social norms a lot.

## UKRAINIAN FOLK TALES

Finally, I want to cover the topic of Ukrainian folklore, because this topic is the most important for me and plays an important part in my diploma project. Ukrainian folklore is my native folklore, which I grew up on, fairy tales of which I was taught in school, and about heroes of whom my parents told me as a child.

Ukrainian folklore is very rich and diverse. Wikipedia calls folklore the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people.[[27]](#footnote-27) Mostly, folklore is all oral and musical folk art. The complex history of Ukraine and the love of Ukrainians for art and artistry contributed to the emergence of a wide variety of genres of Ukrainian folklore. It happened that way that the people whose souls gravitate towards showing off artistically throughout history had many opportunities and reasons to glorify or condemn historical events and everyday life that surrounded them. In Ukrainian folklore there are many thoughts, ballads, poems, folk words, stories, sagas, fables, and fairy tales.

Most of all, they are the folk tales that appealed most to my taste. And the reason is that these were the Ukrainian folk tales that I was surrounded by during my childhood. And I still have a warm feeling towards them, and that is why I would like to raise this topic at the end.

First of all, what is a fairy tale? According to terminology accepted in Ukrainian literature, a fairy tale is called a fantastic story, without a clear moralizing purpose[[28]](#footnote-28) (according to the systemat proposed by Ivan Franko in the collection Ethnographer I). But the folk tale is something different.

The Ukrainian folk tale is a popular folklore genre (folklore means "folk wisdom"). These are the stories of our distant ancestors and everything that surrounded them in nature. The nature in our region is rich, colorful, lush. All this wealth, as well as life, customs, traditions, beliefs of the people, are reflected in stories — folk tales.

In folk tales the wisdom of the people is passed on from generation to generation, everything that deserves the attention of descendants, life experience, dreams of the people, their feelings. Folk tales also reflected important historical events. Some tales fostered love for their native land, native home, native mother, others for the people and the Motherland as a whole. There are also humorous and satirical works. But, despite the fact that different groups of fairy tales differ in theme and form, their ideas are similar. They all glorify the wise, the brave, and the resourceful, and condemn the treacherous and lazy.

## UKRAINIAN FOLK TALE CLASSIFICATION AND MORALITY

Historically, the most ancient types of tales are animal tales or "animal epos" tales. Animals in fairy tales embody a certain dominant trait or character of man: the wolf is a hungry predator, the fox — cunning, the bear – clumsy. The actions of the animal fairy tale heroes are humanized: they talk, communicate, interact. That is why the content of these tales is most accessible to preschool children. In fairy tales about animals, there are no fantastic creatures, and mostly short rhymed songs predominate in them.

Social-everyday tales tell stories about the life of people with all its joys and misfortunes, their experience, family relationships. The leading motifs of these tales are among others the trial of truth over falsehood, opposition of the poor to the rich, the motif of work, clashes of generosity and parsimony.

Magic fairy tales are characterized by the obligatory presence of magic objects, wizards. Positive characters of fairy tales are portrayed as strong, courageous. Benefactors always overcome evil. Different beasts, animals, birds, fishes, the vivacious forces of nature help to create good in fantastic fairy tales. This is where scientists see the environmental function of magic fairy tales. Attentive and friendly attitude towards nature is something that Ukrainian folk tales are always full of.

The table below shows the identification of different well-known Ukrainian folk tales.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Animal folk tales | Social-everyday folk tales | Magic tales |
| Turnip  (Ріпка) | Wise girl  (Мудра дівчина) | Ivasyl-Telesyk  (Івасик-Телесик) |
| Kolobok  (Колобок) | About truth and falsehood (Про правду і кривду) | Kotyhoroshko  (Котигорошко) |
| Chicken Ryaba  (Курочка Ряба) | Chatty girl  (Язиката Хвеська) | Queen the Frog  (Царівна Жаба) |
| The Glove (Рукавичка) | (Названій батько) | Magic Egg (Яйце-Райце) |
| Thatched goby  (Солом’яний бичок) | Grandfather’s daughter and grandmother’s daughter (Дідова дочка і бабина дочка) | Kyrylo – the tanner  (Кирило Кожум’яка) |
| Fox and Crane  (Лисичка і Журавель) | Mercenary and overlord  (Наймит і пан) | Oh (Ох) |
| Mr. Cat (Пан Коцький) | To all woes trouble (Всім бідам біда) | The Frosty (Морозко) |

Each fairy tale has a certain didactic purpose or, in other words, "a moral message". Properly, clearly and concisely communicated to the minds of children the "moral rule" of the fairy tale is supposed to help them to understand the world of people, things, and nature.

Main topics of social-everyday Ukrainian folk tales:

1. The judgment of truth over wrongdoing as the dream of deprived people.

2. Love for the native land.

3. The juxtaposition of the poor and the rich (very often the poor man is clever and resourceful, while the overlord or rich man is ignorant).

4. Love for work – the opposition of hardworking people and lazy people.

5. "Bread and gold" — condemned the thirst for money and showed that for a person bread is much more expensive than any money.

The variety of Ukrainian folk tales is very wide. There is even a classification of tales, intended for a certain age of children. Each tale is a lesson, there aren’t meaningless folk stories in Ukrainian folklore. Even stories for the youngest children have deeper meanings which not always come to mind at a first glance.

The first fairy tales that children hear that introduce them to the magical world of what is the fictional, the fantastical and at the same time interwoven with daily life and its realities are the tales of early childhood:

“Glove”, “Cat and Rooster”, “Ivasyk-Telesyk”, “Chicken Ryaba”, “Kolobok”, “Turnip”, “Straw Goby”.

Glove

"Glove"[[29]](#footnote-29) is a fairy tale about a lost glove found by animals who then decided to live in it. A fairy tale shows affection between characters and teaches to share with others and to reconcile with one another. The fairy tale belongs to the most ancient kind of folk epic, which was born in pre-class society, associating itself with the production activity of the primitive man.

Animals are stereotyped to some extent. Many fairy-tale characters have acquired an allegorical meaning, symbolizing a certain trait of behavior or activity. For example, a fox became a symbol of cunning, treachery, a wolf — cruelty, a hare — cowardice, a horse — hard work, a dog — loyalty.

Kolobok

“Kolobok”[[30]](#footnote-30) is a character of the East Slavic fairy tale of the same name, a round product made of flour that escaped from the house and was eaten by a fox. Originally a kolobok is a ball-shaped object, including the name of a flour product (bread, biscuits, dumplings) that has a circle shape.

This fairy tale teaches children that it is dangerous to run away from your home and parents.

In fairy tales for the youngest children, the main characters are animals. Enemies are carnivorous wild beasts (in the fairy tale "Kolobok" — a fox, "The wolf and seven goats" (Вовк та семеро козлят) — a wolf), while pets and house animals, that helped a person survive in the fairy tales are kind, thankful, and they will always come to rescue. Friendship and devotion is shown in the fairy tale Cat and Rooster (Кіт та Півень), teamwork and family support of the fairy tale "Turnip"(Ріпка).

Chicken Ryaba

One of the first tales that a child hears is a “Chicken Ryaba” folk tale. The tale seems very basic and unpretentious but actually has a deep meaning. “Once upon a time there lived a grandfather and a grandmother. And they had the chicken Ryaba. The chicken laid an egg, but not a simple one but one made of gold. Grandfather tried to beat – the egg did not break. Grandmother tried to beat – the egg did not break. And the mouse ran, waved its tail and the egg fell and crashed. Grandfather was crying, grandmother was crying, but chicken Ryaba told them: — Don’t cry, grandfather, do not cry, grandmother: I’ll lay you a new egg, not a golden one, but a simple one!”[[31]](#footnote-31)

This tale has multiple interpretations, from simple statements such as “what we have — we don’t value, but when we lose it – we cry”, “if you never lived rich – you shouldn’t even start” or “old age is not joy: both grandfather and grandmother were weaker than a small mouse.” The most popular interpretation is probably that a golden egg didn’t bring happiness to the old couple’s life but only tears.

Let's lets take a look at the most famous primary-school-age fairy tales: “Kotygoroshko”, “Grandfather's Daughter and Grandmother's Daughter”, “Heaven Egg”, “Flying Ship”, “Kyrylo Kozhumyaka”, “Oh”, “Crooked Duck”, “Truth and falsehood”.

Kotyhoroshko

The Ukrainian people throughout history often had to defend their freedom and interests. Perhaps that has influenced the popularity and the wide variety of tales about the rich men (bohatyr) – courageous and brave defenders and warriors. A classic example of a tale that reflects the love of Ukrainian people to bohatyrs and courageous people is the story about Kotyhoroshko.

The man sends six sons to plow the field, and his daughter to bring them lunch. The daughter goes to search for the brothers by the harrow, but the snake plows a new harrow, hides there, and kidnaps the girl. The brothers set out to free her; the serpent causes them to fight. He defeats all six and also imprisons them.

Their mother eats a pea rolled by, after which she gives birth to a son whom she calls Kotyhoroshko. The boy grows fast, becomes extremely strong, and while digging a well, finds a piece of iron. He then asks his parents where his brothers and sister are. Parents convince Kotyhoroshko not to search for them, but Kotyhoroshko brings iron to the blacksmith so that he can make weapons to fight the snake. The blacksmith forges the mace, Kotyhoroshko twice tosses it, testing for strength. The first time the weapon breaks in two when it falls, and the second only bends. Taking the mace, Kotyhoroshko follows the harrow to the snake yard.

Hiding in a snake shelter, Kotyhoroshko is waiting for the snake. The snake asks Hotyhorosho to fight and dies. Kotyhoroshko takes away the snake's treasures and frees the prisoners but does not state that he is their brother. On the way home, he falls asleep, and the brothers plan to tie Kotyhoroshko with his face to the oak and tell his parents that they have overcome the snake. Upon arriving home, the brothers learn from their parents about Kotyhoroshko. Kotyhorosho pulls out an oak with roots and throws it into the house. He then leaves the house.

Traveling around the world, Kotyhoroshko meets three men with extraordinary powers: Vernigor, Vernidub, and Krutivus. Vernigor is able to move mountains, Vernidub — to dig oaks with his bare hands, and Krutivus makes the water turn part. Four of them get to an empty log cabin in the woods where they stay overnight.

In the next three days, three go hunting, and one remains in the lodge to watch and cook. Each time a small, but powerful old man comes, demanding to put him across the threshold. Vernigor, Vernidub, and Krutyvus are disrespectful to the old man, but the old man hangs the guard on a clove, eats everything cooked and leaves. The guards do not admit it, telling others that they have fallen asleep and have not had time to prepare food. On the fourth day, Kotyhoroshko himself remains in the lodge. He puts the old man across the threshold, but the old man still tries to hang Kotyhorosho as well. Kotyhoroshko pinches his beard in the oak. The old man pulls out the oak and runs away.

The trace leads to a pit which Vernigora, Vernidub and Krutyvus are afraid to go down. They knit ropes on which Kotyhoroshko goes down into the pit. At the bottom, there appears to be a palace and a princess who tries to convince Kotyhoroshko not to fight the battle against her grandfather. Kotyhoroshko still fights with him, kills him and takes away the treasures and the princess. His comrades pull out three bags of treasures and the princess to the surface and decide to leave Kotyhoroshko in the pit. He binds a stone instead of himself and stays unharmed.

Kotyhoroshko protects little birds from thunderstorms. When the mom bird arrives and wonders who covered them from the rain, little birds give out Kotyhoroshko. For this the bird promises to fulfill his desire he wants to fly to the surface. The bird orders him to take six pieces of meat and water to feed her during the flight. There is not enough meat, so Kotyhoroshko cuts off his calf and gives it to the bird. When the bird found out what Kotyhoroshko feeds her, she belches the calf and brings in fresh water. Sprinkled with water, the calf grows back to Kotyhoroshko.

Getting out of the pit, Kotyhoroshko searches for Vernigor, Vernidub, and Krutyvus. He punishes his comrades and marries the princess.[[32]](#footnote-32)

In my opinion, the story about Kotyhorosho shows not only strong and courageous sides of the young bohatyr but also his ability to stand for himself, not to look back and always try your best. The example of Kotyhoroshko teaches children to be both physically and mentally strong and ready for life turns. And of course, the classic according to which everything you do will pay off in the end.

There is also a more serious and deep point of view of ethnologists on the story. Ethnologists say that the motive of liberation of the serpent brothers is the liberation from foreign oppression. They also claim that the motive of the bride's abduction is a reflection of the original practice of transferring her from her parents to her own. In this case, the boy can find a bride of another kind, where he was transferred to educate himself. Fighting with the bride's guards is an allegory of the magical struggle against the totem of the genus. It also represents the original ritual of killing the king (or the person who symbolizes him) necessary to marry his daughter and inherit the throne.

In any way, it is clear that a story that may seem not to carry an obvious and straightforward message during the narration ends up with presenting a model of a good man according to Ukrainian beliefs.

Kyrylo Kozhumyaka

Kyrylo Kozhumyaka (sometimes Mykyta Kozhumyaka, Nikita Kozhumyaka), in some sources he is called Kyrylo the Tanner ([Ukrainian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_language): Кирило Кожум'я́ка) – a character of ancient folk epos, famous in the territory of the East Slavic ethnic groups in the times of Kievan Rus. It was first recorded by the chronicler of Kyiv in "The Story of the Temporary Years" in 6501 (993).

The [fairy tale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairy_tale) of Kyrylo talks about a dragon, [Zmey Gorynych](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavic_dragon), who used to attack the lands of Rus and take beautiful girls as prisoners. One day he even kidnapped the daughter of the Kievan [prince](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kniaz). To find out the dragon's weakness, the woman pretended to fall in love with him. Gorynych revealed to her there was only one person that could defeat him: a tanner from Kyiv named Kyrylo. The princess told this to her pigeon, who alerted her father, the prince. The prince went to the tanner's house to ask for help. It took the prince a while to persuade Kyrylo into fighting, and the bohatyr refused the wealth and power that the prince offered him. Eventually, the prince gathered hundreds of children in front of Kyrylo 's house, and they begged the bogatyr to save them from Gorynych's attacks. Only then Kyrylo agreed to fight.

Kyrylo then went to Gorynych's lair, and, after a long fight, had the dragon heavily beaten with his heavy wooden club. Frightened, the dragon offered Kyrylo to become allies and rule the world together. Kyrylo demanded that they plow the border of their halves of the world, then used the dragon instead of a plowing horse. After they plowed the furrow across the whole world, Kyrylo demanded that they plow further to divide the sea as well. The foolish Gorynych obeyed and drowned in the ocean.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The story of Kyrylo Kozhumyaka is an example of noble behavior. The story teaches readers that material promises were not important for Cyril. But he was ready to fight the dragon just to help the people. In Ukrainian fairy tales, the idea of loyalty and unity with the people is very widespread.

Ivasyk-Telesyk

Finally, I want to mention a fairy tale that I chose for my diploma project. Namely the story of Iwasyk-Telesyk. I would not say that this fairy tale is very unusual or somehow very different from other Ukrainian folk tales. On the contrary, I think it is such a classic example of the Ukrainian folk tale. It contains the main, rather shrewd or courageous (depending on the way one looks at it) character, magic animal characters, strange things caused by either the magic or power of nature and, of course, morality.

In the folk story called “Ivasyk-Telesyk” we find an example of an interesting attitude of the people and their relation to nature. At the beginning of the story, when an old couple is sad about not having children, they decide to put a log into a cradle and pretend that a log is their child. Through magic the next morning the log transforms into a boy.

I think it is very interesting how in folk stories people endow nature with such life-giving power, and do not question its magic. The role of magic in folk tales can have different aspects. First of all, magic is used to explain the unexplainable. Like human-nature transformations or when children are being born from a natural phenomenon. Secondly, magic is helpful and encouraging to children’s imagination. Thirdly, in the old days, people used to explain things they didn’t understand with magical powers. Probably this has also reflected in folk stories.

Such folk stories were a powerful tool to teach children how to behave. For example, in Ivasyk-Telesyk, we can have a look at the situation where Telesyk asks his dad to make a boat and decides to go fishing to feed his parents. He fishes all day and spends a lot of time on the lake. This part teaches children to be hardworking since early childhood and care for their parents. From the parent’s point of view, we also see that relatives should care for their offspring and teach them how to stay safe. This is represented in the part where Telesyk’s mother brings her son food 3 times a day and teaches him not to talk with strangers and to respond only to her voice.

The most questionable part for me is when Telesyk is being fooled by a snake. The snake brings him home to cook him in the oven. Telesyk is not scared, he fools the snake’s daughter, asking her to show how to properly seat on a shovel. She shows him and he puts her into the oven instead. When the mother snake comes back with guests to have dinner, the guests enjoy the meal, but then realize that they had eaten the snake’s daughter.

This part seems odd to me although, when I was a child, there wasn’t anything strange about animals and people trying to kill and eat each other… Right now, I think it is easier to perceive or even adopt such a violent situation when you are a child, probably because at young ages children have flexible minds, and at that time they had not yet acquired specific rules of social morals. At this stage, I think it is important to teach children to understand that everything that happens in a fairy tale can be wrong, or not worth adopting as one’s own. The thing about fairy tales is that they show children examples of what is good and what is bad. But by being in the position of a “teacher” for children, they have this power of structuring the child’s mind. And I think it is important for parents to understand this power of fairy tales and be next to a child to support them and explain the idea of having a good head on their shoulders.

## CONCLUSION

In this work, I tried to express myself on the topic of folk tales. What is their place in our lives today? Are they important? How have they been transforming and shaping morality throughout history? Which ideas do different nations put into the folk tales? How are they similar and how do they differ from one another? What is the aim of folk tales, what do they want to teach and who do they want to teach it to? And do they want to teach at all?

I have been questioning myself and trying to find answers, based on already existing ideas of psychologists, philosophers, and Wikipedia. I also put my own thoughts on how I see folk tales and what I think their meanings are.

To summarize, I would say that a folk tale is, I can’t say a living organism, but it something that is constantly changing, evolving, transforming, trying to reach a historically appropriate shape. Folk tales are definitely an important part of the culture, they are keepers of history, at some point. And, perhaps, nowadays they are not on the peak of popularity among children literature and entertainment, but I feel like folk tales deserve to be considered entertaining and instructive for children even today.

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